

DRESSMAKING AND TAILORING AS A BUSINESS:

SOME BEST PRACTICES

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO THE VIDEO

**University of Technology
Entrepreneurial Extension Centre
237 Old Hope Road
Kingston 6, Jamaica**

**Financed by:
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FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO THE VIDEO

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A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

. PURPOSE

This guide was prepared to provide information on how to use the dressmaking and tailoring video as a training tool in a group training session. This step-by-step guide is intended to help facilitators to structure discussion so that individuals viewing the video are able to remember key points and put them into practice in their own businesses.

The purpose of the video is to demonstrate to owners and operators key practices which lead to growth and success in a garment manufacturing business. These practices are illustrated in the video through interviews with real dressmakers and tailors filmed at their businesses. The video is based on research into the experiences of many garment manufacturers throughout Jamaica.

The “Participant's Guide to the Video: Dressmaking and Tailoring As A Business” was prepared to accompany the facilitator's guide. The Participant's Guide is intended to help video viewers to remember the main points from the video and encourages them to take notes and to set their own goals for implementing best practices in their own businesses.

. STRUCTURE

This guide consists primarily of a series of questions to be asked of training participants. Facilitators are instructed to stop the video at specific points, giving them an opportunity to engage participants in discussion and analysis of what they have seen in order to help them to process and retain the information shared in the video. The questions are written in bold type to enable facilitators to easily locate and read them. Participant responses are noted on flip chart paper so that a visual record of the session is formed, and to permit additional information to be added on each topic as participants view subsequent portions of the video.

One of the tasks of the facilitator is to adopt this guide to the needs of the individual participants in a specific training session. The needs of particular groups will vary based

on their characteristics, including business size, time in business, geographic location, and the participants' ability to quickly learn and grasp new ideas. The facilitator can choose to allow more time for discussions which arise during the training, or to pursue topics which are not referred to in the video but are of particular interest to the participants. Questions can also be asked in a different order than that presented in the guide, or less emphasis may be placed on some topics.

MATERIALS

To carry out the training session described in this guide, facilitators need:

VCR and television

A copy of the "Participant's Guide to the Video: Dressmaking and Tailoring As A Business" for each participant

Flip chart paper and markers

TIME

The training session described in this guide requires approximately 3.5 hours. However, if the facilitator chooses to allow more time for certain discussions, or to pursue topics which are not referred to in the video, the session could also take longer.

PREPARATION

Facilitators should view the video prior to teaching the training session to insure that they understand the points that are made and know where to stop the video each time.

Before the session, write the following titles on pages of flip chart paper, one to a page:

IDENTIFY YOUR MARKET

GROWTH STRATEGY

GARMENT QUALITY

CUSTOMER SERVICE

EMPLOYEE HIRING AND TRAINING

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

ADVERTISING

OWNER TRAINING

PRICING

Each page should be posted somewhere in the training room where it can be written on during the session and is visible to all participants. Facilitators should also prepare copies of the participant's guide for each participant.

B. SESSION DETAIL

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION

Before beginning to view the video, the facilitator should make sure that all participants are comfortable participating in the session and are motivated to learn. If appropriate, participants should introduce themselves to each other and to the facilitator. Tell participants that the video is based on the experiences of many garment manufacturers, and that by learning from them they may be able to avoid making mistakes and to find new ways to succeed.

Distribute the participant's guide and briefly review its contents with the group. Explain that they will be looking for and discussing best practices in the categories listed on the flip charts posted around the walls; show them where the same categories are listed in their participant's guides. Encourage participants to make notes in their guides in the space provided on pages 3-5, and to add ideas generated during the session to the checklist on pages 1-2.

Time for this step: 15 minutes

STEP 2: VIEWING THE VIDEO

Turn on the video and have participants watch the introduction and then Mrs. Davis's presentation. Turn off the video at the end of her interview, when the screen fades to black after she says "A nine to five job could not help me to do all those things. I think it's worth the trouble."

Time for this step: 10 minutes

STEP 3: DISCUSSION

Remind participants that Mrs. Davis discussed many important areas, and explain that the group will be discussing some of them now and some later. Say that her comments can be grouped into best practices in the broad areas of Market, Growth Strategy, Quality, Customer Service, Employee Hiring and Training, Business Management and Pricing.

- a. Say that first they will be discussing the market for Mrs. Davis's products. Ask "**Who buys the clothes Mrs. Davis makes?**" Answer should be individuals and retail stores. Remind participants that she also sells trimming and fabric from her store. Note their answers on the flip chart titled "Identify Your Market". Ask "**What did Mrs. Davis say about how she chose this niche?**" Answer should include that she saw a need to save

time in going out to purchase trim, and this retail activity has grown to 40% of her business. Say that they will return to the subject of identifying a market after viewing more of the video.

- b. Explain that Mrs. Davis's story about starting up her business and causing it to grow provides a lot of important guidance. Ask **“Do you remember how her business started up and grew?”** and note their answers on the flip chart titled “Growth Strategy”. Answer should include: Mrs. Davis learned to sew as a child; started small when the factory she worked for was on strike; borrowed money to purchase another machine; decided to market to stores; bought a specialized machine (a serger); and added other workers. Ask **“Do you think this was an effective strategy? Why or why not?”** Tell participants that Mrs. Davis provided a clue as to how all this was accomplished when she said, “What was important to me was that whatever I make from the business I must give back.” Ask **“What do you think she means by this?”** Answer should be that profit must be reinvested in the business in order for it to grow. Ask **“Is this approach important? Do you practice it in your own businesses? Why or why not?”**
- c. Say that next Mrs. Davis discussed how finish contributes to the high quality of her garments. Write “Finish” on the flip chart titled “Garment Quality”. Ask **“What comments did Mrs. Davis make about the finish of a garment?”** Answer should be that she finishes seams with the serger. Ask participants **“What other items contribute a high quality finish on a garment?”** Note answers on the flip chart under the word “Finish”. Ask **“Why is a quality finish important?”** Note that Mrs. Davis mentioned that it brings better price and helps to compete with factory-made products.
- d. Ask **“What key points did Mrs. Davis make about insuring customer satisfaction?”** and note participants' answers on the flip chart titled “Customer Service”. Answer should include that she listens to what customers want, gives advice about what fabric is suitable for certain designs or garments, takes careful measurements, and puts a care label in each garment. Ask **“What other ways do you insure customer satisfaction?”** and note answers on the flip chart.
- e. Ask participants **“What did Mrs. Davis suggest about keeping control over business activities?”** and note answers on flip titled “Business Management”. They should mention that she talked about keeping track of stock, and she also kept a record for each customer. Ask **“What system did she demonstrate for keeping track of stock?”** She used a log which shows how much was purchased and what was used for each garment. Ask **“Why is this an important practice?”**
- f. Ask **“What did Mrs. Davis say about how she sets her prices?”** Answer should be that she includes all “overhead” costs as well as costs for the product itself. Ask **“What are overhead costs?”** They are fixed costs for keeping the business running, regardless of the number of products produced (for example, rent, utilities, salaries, etc.). Ask **“Do**

you remember how much profit Mrs. Davis charged?” Discuss how profit margin can be determined. Ask **“Did Mrs. Davis say anything about her own salary?”** Answer should be yes, she included it as a fixed cost. Ask **“Is this a good idea? Why or why not?”** Remind participants that separating their personal finances from that of the business is always an effective strategy because it helps to prevent using business assets for personal expenses. Ask **“Do you manage your own businesses this way? Why or why not?”** Take notes from the discussion on the flip chart titled “Pricing”.

Say that they will return to some of these topics and others after watching another portion of the video.

Time for this step: 35 minutes

STEP 4: VIEWING THE VIDEO

Turn on the video and have participants watch the presentation by Mr. Cranston. Turn off the video at the end of his interview, after he says, “...in pleasing the clients, the business comes.”

Time for this step: 10 minutes

STEP 5: DISCUSSING THE VIDEO

Say that now they will discuss Mr. Cranston's suggestions on the topics discussed previously as well as some additional subjects.

- a. Say that Mr. Cranston's market is substantially different from that of Mrs. Davis. Ask **“Where does Mr. Cranston market his products?”** and note answers on the flip chart titled “Identify Your Market”. Answer should be primarily through custom orders for women, but also through contracts for uniforms. Ask **“How did he identify his market?”** He began by making custom orders and then one of his customers recommended him to her employer for a contract for uniforms. Say that they will return to this topic a final time after the next presentation.
- b. Mr. Cranston also emphasized the exclusivity of his designs. Ask **“Why might exclusivity be important, and how is it related to the topic of market niche?”** Answer should include that such an approach leads to customer satisfaction in a challenging market. He has found a market in well-to-do women who do not want to see anyone else wearing clothes that are identical to theirs, and want clothes tailored to them.

- c. Ask **“How did Mr. Cranston expand his customer base; what kind of advertising did he use?”** Answer should be through word of mouth; “one person tell the other person and you know it grows.” Ask **“How did Mrs. Davis sell her product?”** She mentioned going directly to the stores to make her sales. Note both answers on the flip chart titled “Advertising”.
- d. Ask **“Do you remember how Mr. Cranston got started in his business?”** He worked for a tailor, repairing garments, and studied the design and construction of each one. From there he began sewing garments designed by the tailor, and then began designing clothes himself. Note participant responses on flip chart titled “Owner Training”.
- e. Ask **“What strategy did Mr. Cranston use for starting up his business?”** Answer should refer to his partnership with a former customer who had money to invest as well as the ability to manage the administration of the business. Note this information on the chart titled “Growth Strategy”.
- f. Ask **“How did Mr. Cranston define a quality product?”** and note answers on the flip chart titled “Quality”. Answer should include good fit, professional looking, cut properly with respect to grain, and carefully stitched by workers who know how to handle materials and machines. Ask **“What is meant by good fit?”** Mr. Cranston said the garment is cut properly to customer measurements; Mrs. Davis suggested fitting the garment while it's being made, paying special attention to shoulders and waist, and making sure it looks flattering. Ask **“What other suggestions do you have about the characteristics of a quality product?”** noting their answers on the flip chart.
- g. Ask **“What quality control measures are used by the two business owners?”** and note answers on the flip chart titled “Quality”. In Mr. Cranston's case, both he and the supervisor patrol the floor from time to time. Mrs. Davis says she checks the work of each employee during the production process. Ask **“What is the purpose of quality control?”**
- . Say that now they will compare approaches to hiring and training employees. Ask **“What qualifications does Mrs. Davis look for in hiring staff?”** and note participant answers on the flip chart titled “Employee Hiring and Training”. Answer should be that she hires individuals with more than 5 years of experience. Ask **“Do you remember why?”** She said that training employees is not a good investment because they often leave once they are trained. Ask **“Does Mr. Cranston have the same hiring policy as Mrs. Davis?”** Answer should be no, that Mr. Cranston feels that even experienced employees must be trained on the job, and is willing to nurture people with “potential”. Ask **“What characteristics does Mr. Cranston look for in hiring?”** Answer should include: people who know how to handle machine and material, take pride in their work, and are careful with stitching. Ask **“What other qualities do you think are important? Why is training important, even for experienced employees?”** Answer should include: to

insure that work is done their way. Note important points from the discussion on the flip chart titled “Employee Hiring and Training”.

- j. Both Mrs. Davis and Mr. Cranston talked about the importance of delivering completed work on time. Ask **“How does Mr. Cranston meet deadlines under pressure?”** Answer should be that he suggested working overtime or hiring extra help for a brief period.

Time for this step: 45 minutes

STEP 6: VIEWING THE VIDEO

Turn on the video and have participants watch the presentation by Mrs. Grant. Turn off the video at the end of the program, after the final comments and credits.

Time for this step: 10 minutes

STEP 7: DISCUSSING THE VIDEO

Say that now you are going to discuss additional ideas brought up by Mrs. Grant.

- a. Remind participants that Mrs. Grant emphasized proper training for business owners. Ask **“What type of training did Mrs. Grant discuss?”** and note responses on the flip chart titled “Owner Training”. Answer should be both management and technical training; specifically, she studied design and pattern making at a community college. Ask **“Do you think that both types of training are important? Why or why not?”** Remind participants that they can find information on sources of training as well as other resources on the last page of the participant's guide.
- b. Say that Mrs. Grant spoke about networking. Ask **“What do you think Mrs. Grant means by networking?”** She says small business people can share information and support each other so all can learn and grow. Ask **“Do you agree about the importance of networking? Why or why not? What are some practical ways to network?”**
- c. Say **“Describe Mrs. Grant’s market.”** Answer should be that she markets to individuals. Ask **“How did you select the market for your businesses? How are the products for these markets the same, and how are they different?”** For example, someone ordering uniforms will probably value consistency more than design.
- d. Ask **“What did Mrs. Grant advise about customer service?”** and note answers on the

appropriate flip chart. Answer should be that she spoke about finding out what your customer wants, as did Mrs. Davis. Ask **“What did Mrs. Grant say about finding out what the customer wants?”** She emphasized that you must discover what they need, and use their ideas to spark your own creativity. Remind participants that both Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Grant sketched the design to show it to the customer. Ask **“What are other ways to determine what the customers wants?”** Remind them that an explicit agreement about the product to be made helps to insure that the customer will be satisfied with the product.

- e. Ask **“With respect to price, what did Mrs Grant emphasize?”** The product must be affordable to the customer, and that you should find out from the beginning how much the customer has to spend. Note answers on flip chart titled “Pricing”. Ask **“How is price related to market?”** Answer should be that you must know your customer, and what s/he is able to afford. Ask **“Is price or exclusivity more important to your particular customer? What is your own strength?”**
- f. Returning to the subject of finishing an order on time, ask **“What did Mrs. Grant suggest can be done if you are not going to meet your deadline?”** Answer should be that you call the person ahead of time to warn them and to make an alternative arrangement.
- g. Mrs. Grant described putting in place a system for scheduling when orders would be done. Ask **“How did she schedule her orders?”** On screen, we saw her with a list where each order was noted down with a corresponding delivery date. She talked about assigning levels of importance to each order in order to meet her advertised promise of “quick response”. Note this system on the flip chart titled “Business Management”.
- h. Ask **“What did Mrs. Grant show us about an important advertising tool?”** We saw her brochure on the screen; “quick response” is a good sales technique. Note on flip chart titled “Advertising”.
- i. Remind participants that Mrs. Grant talked about employee motivation. Ask **“What did she suggest about incentives?”** Answer should be that she tailors the incentive to the individual - to some a nurturing environment may be important, while others need monetary incentive. Ask **“How did Mrs. Grant get to know her employees?”** We saw her sitting and talking with them. Ask **“What are other incentives which can be offered to employees?”** noting answers on the flip titled “Employee Hiring and Training”.
- j. Say that with respect to business management, Mrs. Grant said that while many tasks can be delegated, the business owner must keep track of all activities and be able to tell when things are being done right. Write “Delegate” on the flip chart titled “Business Management”. Ask **“Do you agree or disagree with Mrs. Grant? Why?”**

- k. Say that at the end of the video, Mrs. Grant talks about making a business plan. Ask **“Can you describe what a business plan is? Why is a business plan important? Do you have this type of plan for your own businesses? Why or why not? How is a business plan related to growth strategy?”**
- l. Ask **“Do you have other experiences or ideas you would like to add to the discussion on any of these topics, or any other topics you would like to discuss?”** Note their responses on the appropriate flip chart, or create new flip charts if needed.

Time for this step: 50 minutes

STEP 8: SETTING GOALS

Emphasize that an important part of any training is practicing what has been learned, and explain that they should practice these ideas in their own businesses. In order to help participants focus on what to practice, ask them to spend 10 minutes noting down their own goals with respect to each of the categories discussed. **“What do you want to accomplish or implement in your own businesses, based on what you have learned today? When do you plan to accomplish each goal?”** Ask them to note their own goals and timeline for achieving them in the space provided in the participant's guide pages 3-5.

Tell participants that they probably will not have time during the session to make final decisions about goals in each area, and that they should complete the work at home. Suggest that they keep the Participant's Guide at hand so they can consult it frequently; perhaps they can post the checklist (pages 1-2 of the guide) where they will see it every day as a reminder.

Ask if 2 or 3 participants are willing to share some of their goals with the rest of the group.

Time for this step: 20 minutes

STEP 7: CLOSING

Ask if participants recall what Mrs. Davis, Mr. Cranston and Mrs. Grant said about why they choose to be self employed and if they remember that all three talked about the joy and successful feeling that come from making the customer happy. Ask participants to talk about why they are self-employed and why they chose garment manufacturing as a business.

Time for this step: 15 minutes

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE TO THE VIDEO

DRESSMAKING AND TAILORING AS A BUSINESS: SOME BEST PRACTICES

“Do the right thing, the business plan, network with people who understand these things, and go into business and be a success!” (Mrs. Grant)

• KEY BEST PRACTICES

Ask yourself whether you are implementing the best practices suggested in the video in the following key areas:



IDENTIFY YOUR MARKET

•